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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN ILLINOIS: SECOND QUARTER 2005

The average weekly wage in McLean County increased 5.7 percent from the second quarter of 2004 to the second quarter of 2005, the largest advance among Illinois' 14 counties with 75,000 or more jobs. Cook County was second with wage growth of 4.9 percent. Cook County also had the highest average weekly wage level in Illinois at \$902, followed by Lake County at \$896. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Jay A. Mousa noted that among Illinois' 14 largest counties, half reported wage growth above the national rate of 3.9 percent, but only 4 had wages above the national level of \$751.

Wage Levels

Among those four counties in Illinois with wages above the national average, Cook, Lake, and DuPage had levels in excess of \$875 in the second quarter of 2005 and McLean averaged just under \$800 per week, placing all in the top quartile of the national rankings. More specifically, average weekly wages in Cook County and Lake County were about 20 percent above the national average, and ranked 37th and 40th among the 322 largest counties in the U.S. DuPage and McLean Counties were 46th and 79th, respectively, in the rankings.

At the lower end of the spectrum in the State, St. Clair, Madison and Champaign Counties reported average weekly wage levels of \$610, \$635 and \$642, respectively. Nationwide, wages in these three counties placed in the bottom quartile of the rankings - St. Clair at 277th, Madison at 255th, and Champaign at 249th.

Across the country, average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 116 of the largest 322 U.S. counties. New York County, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,350. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average wage of \$1,316, followed by San Mateo, Calif. (\$1,267), Arlington, Va. (\$1,257), and Washington, D.C. (\$1,236).

The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$463), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$473), Horry, S.C. (\$499), Yakima, Wash. (\$509), and Tulare, Calif. (\$532).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Illinois was \$803, \$52 above the nationwide figure, ranking 8th highest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See table 2.) The highest five wage levels in the nation were in the District of Columbia

(\$1,236); Connecticut (\$946); Massachusetts (\$916); New York (\$913); and New Jersey (\$901). Average weekly wages in this group were 20 percent or more above that for the nation. At the other end of the spectrum, four states had wage levels averaging less than 75 percent of national earnings: South Dakota (\$543), Montana (\$553), Mississippi (\$556), and North Dakota (\$561).

Over-the-Year Changes

Seven of Illinois' 14 large counties recorded wage growth above the national increase of 3.9 percent in the second quarter of 2005. (See table 1.) As mentioned, McLean County's 5.7-percent wage gain led the State and ranked 31st highest in the nation among the 322 largest counties. The average weekly wage in Cook County, the State's largest based on employment, had a wage increase of 4.9 percent, ranking it 62nd in wage growth nationwide. Other counties recording weekly wage gains above that for the nation were Champaign, Will, Kane, McHenry, and Winnebago.

Rock Island was the only large county in the State, and one of only six in the nation, to record a decline in weekly wages, -2.9 percent, from June 2004 to June 2005. All other large counties in Illinois experienced wage growth of more than 2.0 percent, though increases in six were below the national average -- Lake, St. Clair, Peoria, DuPage, Sangamon, and Madison.

Among the largest counties in the U.S., Webb, Texas, led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 11.3 percent over the year. San Mateo, Calif., was second with 10.6-percent growth, followed by the counties of Clark, Nev., (9.4 percent), Collier, Fla., (8.4 percent), Fairfax, Va., (8.1 percent), and Rockingham, N.H., (7.6 percent).

In addition to Rock Island County, Illinois, five other large counties in the U.S. experienced over-the-year declines in their average weekly wage. In rank order, Pierce County, Wash., had the largest decrease, -7.9 percent, followed by the counties of Clayton, Ga. (-6.3 percent), Rock Island, Ill. (-2.9 percent), Spartanburg, S.C. (-2.3 percent), and Trumbull, Ohio (-1.3 percent).

At the state level, the average weekly wage in Illinois increased 4.2 percent, ranking it 13th highest among the 50 states and District of Columbia. Wage gains in the nearby states of Minnesota, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan were noticeably lower, at 2.3, 2.8, 3.1 and 3.4 percent, respectively. Other states (Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri) had rates of growth closer to Illinois', but none exceeded it. Nationally, Nevada had the fastest over-the-year wage increase in the second quarter of 2005 at 7.7 percent and Vermont, the slowest at 1.6 percent.

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.6 million employer reports cover 132.8 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level.

Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2004 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the fourth quarter 2004 version of this news release. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2004* is available for sale from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. Also, the 2004 bulletin is available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn04.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient Web site location, <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Midwest Information Office in Chicago at (312) 353-1880 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

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Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States, Illinois, and the largest counties in Illinois, second quarter 2005²

Area	Employment June 2005 (thousands)	Average weekly wage ³			
		Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁴	Percent change 2004-05 ⁵	National ranking by percent change ⁴
United States ⁶	132,808.3	\$751	--	3.9	--
Illinois	5,816.8	803	8	4.2	13
Champaign, IL	91.2	642	249	4.2	104
Cook, IL	2,527.8	902	37	4.9	62
DuPage, IL	589.1	878	46	2.5	243
Kane, IL	208.4	693	173	4.1	112
Lake, IL	332.1	896	40	3.2	191
Madison, IL	94.6	635	255	2.1	255
McHenry, IL	101.1	670	217	4.0	120
McLean, IL	84.5	798	79	5.7	31
Peoria, IL	100.7	710	150	3.0	207
Rock Island, IL	79.7	704	159	-2.9	315
Sangamon, IL	132.6	734	132	2.1	255
St. Clair, IL	94.3	610	277	3.2	191
Will, IL	171.1	704	159	4.1	112
Winnebago, IL	138.1	656	234	4.0	120

¹Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

²Data are preliminary.

³Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

⁵Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for any noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁶Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered¹ establishments, employment, and wages by state, second quarter 2005²

State	Establishments, second quarter 2005 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage ³	
		June 2005 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2004-05	Average weekly wage	Percent change, second quarter 2004-05
United States ⁴	8,562.00	132,808.3	1.7	\$751	3.9
Alabama	116.8	1,900.6	2.2	644	3.9
Alaska	20.6	315.1	2.7	759	3.3
Arizona	133.1	2,429.7	5.3	723	4.3
Arkansas	77.4	1,158.2	1.8	592	4.2
California	1,213.50	15,387.2	2.0	849	3.5
Colorado	169.3	2,215.9	2.0	769	3.4
Connecticut	110.2	1,676.5	1.2	946	4.3
Delaware	29.9	421.3	.7	797	3.1
District of Columbia	30.5	675.1	1.5	1,236	4.1
Florida	558.8	7,656.1	3.4	689	5.2
Georgia	256.6	3,937.6	2.7	722	3.1
Hawaii	36.1	605.9	3.4	678	4
Idaho	51.6	628.5	3.5	574	3.4
Illinois	336.6	5,816.8	.6	803	4.2
Indiana	153.4	2,889.9	.6	664	2.8
Iowa	91.8	1,475.0	1.7	614	3.9
Kansas	83	1,323.6	.6	636	4.6
Kentucky	105.5	1,772.9	1.8	651	3.8
Louisiana	119.5	1,909.2	1.5	616	4.1
Maine	48.2	610.7	-.6	609	3.7
Maryland	160	2,527.3	1.4	818	4.1
Massachusetts	217.1	3,219.6	.6	916	2.1
Michigan	257.2	4,366.7	.1	768	3.4
Minnesota	161.4	2,664.7	.0	760	2.3
Mississippi	67.5	1,117.3	.7	556	4.1
Missouri	169.6	2,702.2	1.3	678	4.1
Montana	40.2	424.9	1.6	553	4.7
Nebraska	56.4	905.4	1.0	598	3.3
Nevada	66.8	1,220.7	6.4	738	7.7
New Hampshire	47.4	631.7	1.1	754	5.2
New Jersey	270.8	4,012.7	1.4	901	3.4
New Mexico	50.5	784.8	1.9	624	4.5
New York	562.1	8,471.1	.9	913	4.1
North Carolina	233.1	3,855.7	1.7	665	4.1
North Dakota	24.7	333.2	2.0	561	4.1
Ohio	292	5,376.0	.4	693	3.1
Oklahoma	94.9	1,465.3	2.7	594	2.8
Oregon	122.8	1,683.2	2.9	687	2.5
Pennsylvania	335.4	5,620.2	.9	737	3.8
Rhode Island	35.6	487.7	.4	720	3.4
South Carolina	118	1,823.5	.7	621	4.4
South Dakota	29	387.4	1.5	543	3.4
Tennessee	132.4	2,695.7	1.6	670	3.4
Texas	519.1	9,592.4	2.6	738	4.5
Utah	80.5	1,120.9	3.7	622	3.2
Vermont	24.5	304.1	.5	644	1.6
Virginia	212.1	3,618.9	2.2	787	5.5
Washington	206.9	2,825.2	2.4	761	3.4
West Virginia	48	703.0	1.3	612	3.9
Wisconsin	160.6	2,794.0	.9	663	3.1
Wyoming	23	267.0	2.9	616	5.1
Puerto Rico	56.3	1,039.3	-.5	418	2.7
Virgin Islands	3.5	44.3	3.8	639	3.7

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. ² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.